The Sketch

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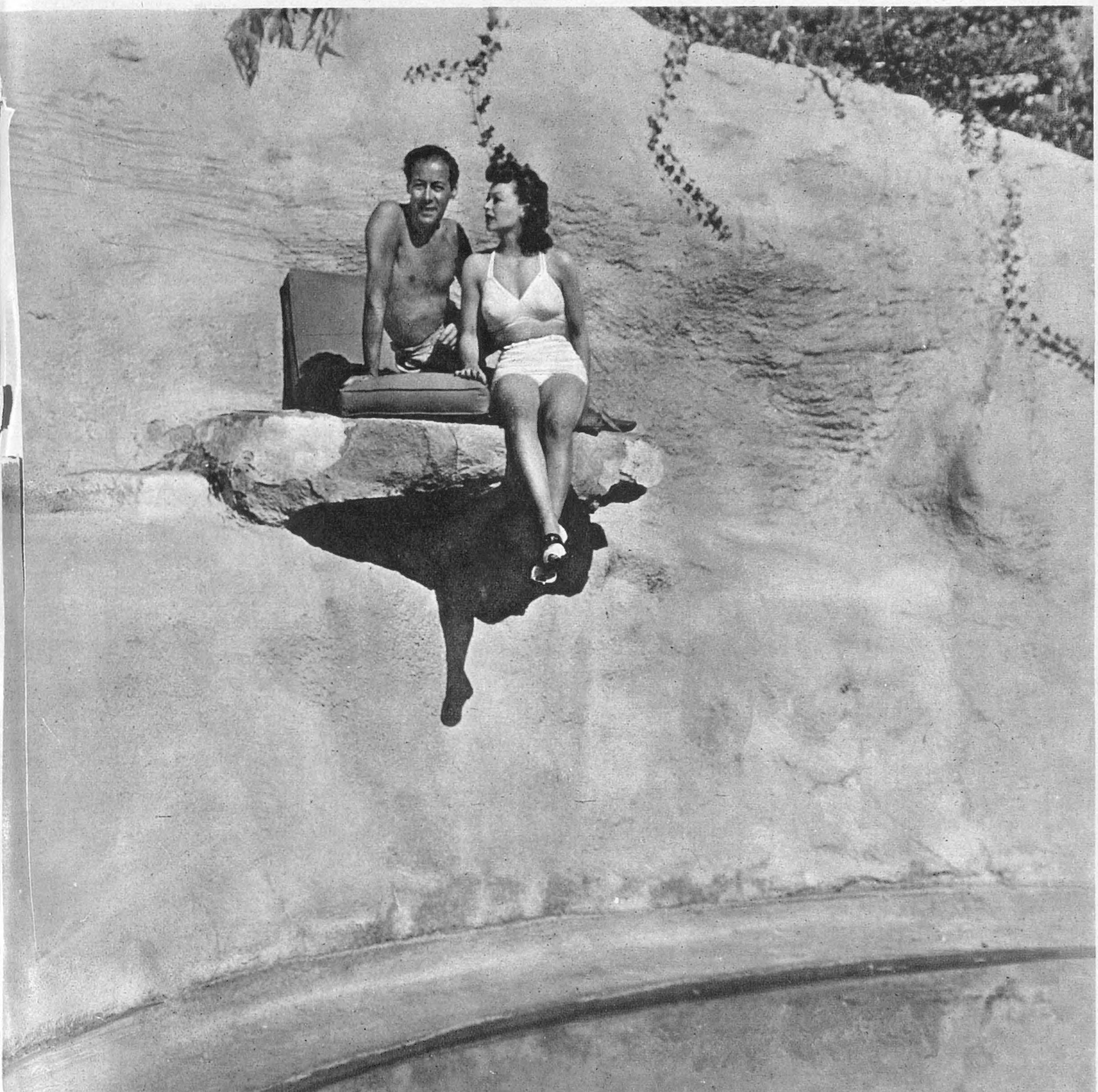


PERCH FOR TWO.

REX HARRISON *and his wife* **LILLI PALMER** *have a sun-warmed perch built in the rock wall overlooking the swimming-pool of the house they are occupying in Hollywood. His latest pictures include " Anna and the King of Siam," 20th Century-Fox's version of the remarkable adventures of an Englishwoman who lived in Bangkok in the eighteen-sixties as governess to the Royal children. He has a rich part as King Mongkut, the intelligent, ruthless despot who ruled Siam at that date. The Rex Harrisons were recently seen in " The Rake's Progress " and Lilli Palmer appeared in " Beware of Pity."*

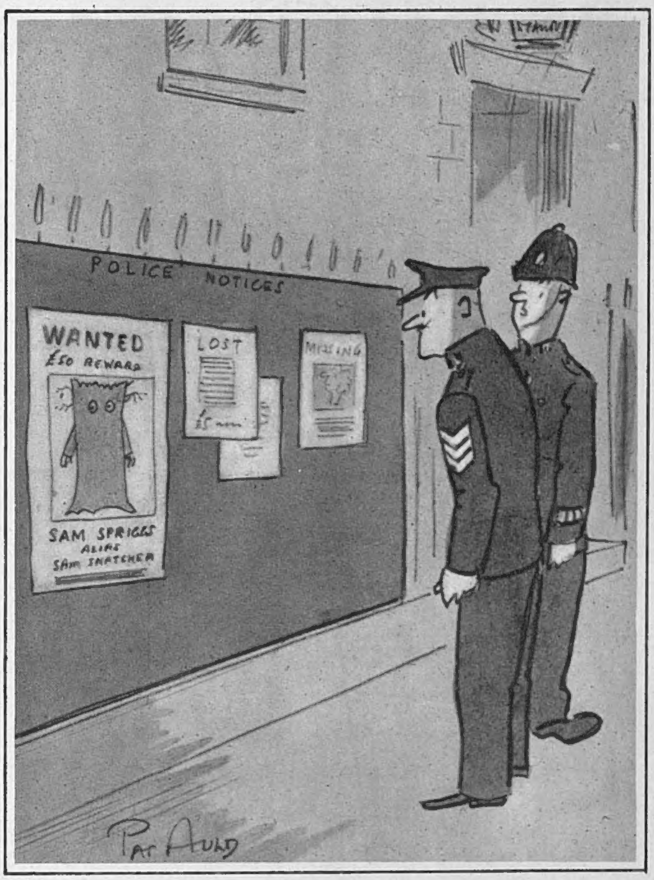
MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

Getting a Move On. The time has come, said Walrus Cripps, to talk of many things—"of the science of happiness and comfort, rather than the techniques of speed and mass murder." An admirable sentiment, with this rider—that the time has not merely come, but it came a long time ago. We are a bit late in the day, and it has become somewhat difficult to recall science from blood and iron to happiness and comfort—all the more difficult because, while comparatively few people find actual happiness and comfort in "mass murder," a very great many seem to find them in speed. I have never understood why, because I have always got a great deal more fright than fun from hurtling through space at muzzle velocity. But that only means, I suppose, that I am lacking in true manhood.

Laid On. Anyhow, what is going to educate us in the science of happiness and comfort? It appears to be electricity. I doubt whether there is a man, woman or child more ignorant of the nature and operation of electricity than the writer of these lines. That is what I dislike about it—it surrounds me, it crackles everywhere, I am dependent upon it in a hundred ways, and I know so little about it that I have to send for so-called experts (who do not exist, or, if existent, do not come) to control it in any manner great or small. However, I suppose a great deal of modern life, and of our "happiness and comfort," is like that. Half the necessities of life are "laid on"; most of us do not know how, but are content to press buttons and turn taps and take what comes. There are, of course, those god-like mortals and model husbands who can tame any of these elemental forces with a hammer or a screw-driver; but they are a class apart, and I stand in awe of them.

The God in the Machine. Mind you, I am not unappreciative of "happiness and comfort" conferred in terms of volts and amperes. Recently, staying in a friend's flat, I found in my bed what I at first took to be a snake—yes, I *had* been dining, ha! ha!—but it turned out to be the sinuous flex of an electric hot-water "bottle." On that Antarctic night it was, I admit, one of the greatest refinements of civilisation that I had ever encountered. Then I am told that many lives are now immeasurably brightened by the prospect of electric irons, with thermostatic control and pilot lights, and even a supply of humidity for the peculiar needs of rayon and similar intractable fripperies. It is odd how much this domestic amenity is valued; the iron has undoubtedly entered into every woman's soul. Then just listen to this, about a new automatic washing-machine: "It does eleven operations without needing any attention. It will take 10 lbs. of clothes, soak, wash, rinse and damp-dry them, control the heat of the water for different fabrics, and, when the clothes are ready to take out, clean itself, drain away the water and shut itself off." And all for £50! Ah, but can it starch a collar? But then, can any laundry starch a collar? You and I know the answer to that one!



"Honest, Sarge, it was the only photograph we had . . . taken when he was in the Army." [DRAWN BY PAT AULD.]

Full Employment. I will not go on with this catalogue of "happiness and comfort," though I have a great deal more evidence of it before me, including the threatened advent of the juke-box. All the statesmen tell us—even if it had not occurred to us already—that this is not the moment for delirious optimism, and while we should rather acclaim all the things that are laid on than lament all those that are laid off, I should not like you to think that buttons and switches have made the world once for all safe for democracy. Even the Airey House, I dare say, is not going to be the acme of "happiness and comfort," and, frankly, I regard its name as a trifle ill-omened, because I have noticed in An Englishman's Home a tendency to confuse the airy and the draughty. However, much more important, with all respect to Sir Stafford, than these material guarantees of the Good Life is a new proposal that we should be a little more choosey about the sort of work we do—for work, I fear, continues to be an important element of the Good Life, and even of the Bad Life.

The Doing and Undoing. When I tell you that this idea emanates from the Psychological Laboratory of Cambridge, and is supported by an endowment of £20,000 from the Nuffield Foundation, perhaps I have said all that is necessary. The

OPERATION "GRAB." [DRAWN BY BARRY APPLEBY.]

general notion is to "find out what things people can do better as they get older and what they are likely to do worse." It is a problem for us all. It makes me ask myself, rather anxiously, whether there are any things I can do better as I get older. I wish I could think of a few, but the only one which occurs to me is that I have come to be far better at the static than the dynamic. Give me plenty of leisure and I think I can make better use of it than in the restless days of youth. It follows that the more leisure I have, the more efficient I shall be. That is the sort of work I feel I ought to do in my declining years, and I have no objection to being paid a handsome salary for doing it. Mr. Bevan, please note. The only difficulty is that Mr. Bevan probably would not recognise me as a "worker" at all. The scrap-heap, therefore, for me and the likes of me!

Where the Rainbow Ends. Another admirable suggestion is that we should all bring more colour into our lives, and in no mere metaphorical sense. The importance of this is shown by common speech, for in America (and more and more in this country, I observe) everything which is worth noticing at all is "colourful"—or, more accurately, "colorful." I have never read a reporter's description of any scene or personality which did not become, at some point or other, colourful. Then let colour be laid on like everything else. We are now to have the entire spectrum at our command, "by turning a dial, to suit moods and conditions in homes, hotels and offices." When feeling blue, turn on the red, and when feeling fierce and revolutionary (after reading the morning's foreign news), try a little green limelight. If tending to see the world with a jaundiced eye, switch to rose pink. It is all very ingenious, but I hope instructions are given with the outfit, because there are "moods and conditions" for which it might be difficult to find the right shades. I have often been fascinated by the chameleonic properties of the thrones on which cinema organists are wont to sit in glory, but the only mood or condition they ever produced in me was definitely homicidal, and I am quite sure that was not intended.

He Who Gets Slapped. And, talking of homicide, which is so absorbing a subject that millions of fiction and newspaper readers are interested in nothing else, I note that the Lord Chief Justice has had something to say lately about crime. Like the divine who preached on sin, he was against it. He observed that we are constantly told to consider the offender, but nobody seems to think it important to consider the offender's victim. The victim, you see, does not have the advantage of being studied, and put into weighty volumes, by psychologists and criminologists; he is merely a negligible by-product. Yet, in the long run, the whole system of pains and penalties exists in order to reduce the number of victims. Mere ferocity of punishment never cures crime—that has been proved over and over again; but in the anxiety to treat the lawless as intelligently and as humanely as possible, there is certainly a tendency to forget that the law-abiding are entitled to protection, for which, indeed, they pay the State their hard-earned pennies.

"Don't look round now, but I am positive that somebody is watching us!" [DRAWN BY BEAR.]

The Honest Penny. I suppose the chief reason why men take up crime is because they think it is profitable; and that, according to all the experts and all the copybooks, is just where they are wrong. Honesty is the best policy if you want to get rich quick: for example, try being a fish-porter. It is stated that Billingsgate swarms with plutocrats—men, perhaps, of rugged exterior, simple ways and homely speech, but all, to a man, quietly earning their £20 a week and laughing merrily at the efforts of Somerset House to tax them on it. Whether this be true or not—and I have my doubts — there are probably bright interludes in the otherwise austere life of a fish-porter. Does it, for example, give them as great a thrill as it evidently gives the daily Press, to

[Continued overleaf.

"Fortunately, Inspector, the thieves have left several well-defined glove-prints about the place." [DRAWN BY SILENUS.]

The one-hundred-and-thirty-seventh of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

be portering "really fresh herrings"? If so, I cannot share their elation, for the only proper thing to do with a fresh herring, which is merely a marine pincushion, is to defreshen it into a kipper.

"No voice at all! What wonderful legs she must have!"

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

Millionaires. Even better than to be a fish-porter is to be an oyster-gatherer—better, because more profitable and apparently more rejuvenating. A likely young lad of Worcestershire, aged 104, stated the other day that he attributed his brisk spirits to cheese, cider and broth. If he had only mixed in a few oysters, he might have been able to look forward to a green old age. So I should judge, at all events, from the Seven Sages of Colne, who are the veterans, or presbytery, of the Oyster Fishery Board. Their combined ages amount to 523 years. The foreman is a mere sixty-nine, the *doyen* being one of his six assistants, aged eighty-six. They have just landed the last Colchester Natives of the season, 128,798 in all; price for the lot (wholesale), £6,000. But are the Seven Sages satisfied? No! They are thinking of the brave old days when their normal catch (or haul, or drag) was four million or so, even though the price was less dizzy. Shall we ever look upon those millions again? I fear not. Without an overdraft, I don't think I could afford even one-four-millionth of the catch (or bag).

The World, the Flesh, and . . .? An oyster has a certain social status—perhaps snobbish, but still a status—of its own; but can the same be said of a scrag-end of mutton or a pound of stewing-steak? The Worshipful Company of Butchers evidently thinks not, and is determined to remedy this social injustice. It is sending a representative, stated to be "one of the world's foremost authorities on pork," on what is described as a Good Will Mission through this and many other lands. The idea is timely, for, to judge by opinions I have heard from queue-haunters, butchers need all the good will they can get nowadays. The plan goes beyond mere sentiment, however, for it contemplates "a new world meat centre to be called Butchers' Hall," and this is to acquire "something of the dignity of the goldsmiths and the vintners." Here I feel a difficulty. Butchery is an honourable calling, and I should be the last to belittle it, but I fear you just cannot make the same music of "meat" and "butcher" as you can of "goldsmith" and "vintner." True, there is (or was) Fishmongers' Hall, but then, as we have seen, fishmongers are so affluent and so little in need of good will that mere names are nothing to them.

Wonderful World. Extra Special from the Wonderful World: A man sneezed in his car and snapped his spine. As soon as the surgeon approached to perform an operation, the patient jumped out of bed and his spine snapped back again. Now, why can't all operations be like that?——A church member in San Francisco had his house burned down. The Minister held a special service to raise a relief fund, and preached a sermon on fire prevention. No sooner had the collection been taken up than the church caught fire and the congregation barely escaped incineration. It looks a bit pointed, when fire is quite as persistent as that. I 'm afraid there must have been a sinner somewhere in the congregation.

Here we have the 19th Regiment of Foot, THE GREEN HOWARDS *(Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment). Formed in 1689, this regiment has fought in almost every theatre of war, maintaining the highest traditions of the British Army. During the recent war it accounted for three Victoria Crosses. The sketches were made at the Regimental depôt where Lt.-Col. Chads commands, and Captain Oldfield is Adjutant.* [CARICATURES BY FRED MAY.]

GO ON SAVING PAPER: IT IS STILL ESSENTIAL.

Gresham Hotel, Dublin.

MENU A LA CARTE

Hors d'Oeuvres

Hors d'Œuvres Varies 2/6 Smoked Salmon 2/6 Egg Mayonnaise 2/-
Oysters 4/- per ½ doz. Homard Cocktail 3/6 Iced Melon
Grapefruit, 1/- per portion

Soups

Croute au Pot 1/6 Petite Marmite 1/6 Puree of Vegetables 1/-
Mutton Broth 1/- Thick Kidney 1/-

Eggs

* Omelettes 3/- Eggs Florentine 2/6 Scrambled Eggs with Tomato 3/6
Eggs Cocotte a la Creme 2/6

Fish

Sole Colbert 5/- Fillets Sole Meuniere 5/- * Sole Waleska 6/- Sole Bonne Femme 6/-
Grilled Sole 5/- Fried Fillet Plaice and Tartar Sauce 5/- Boiled Turbot, Lobster Sauce 4/-
* Lobster Cardinal 7/6 * Lobster Mornay 7/6 Cold Lobster and Salade 7/6
* Lobster Newbourg 8/6
Salmon, Grilled or Poached 6/-

Entree

Tournedos Garni 4/6 * Noisettes de Pre Sale Reforme 4/- Minced Chicken Duchesse 5/6
* Saute of Kidney and Mushrooms 4/6 * Escaloppe of Veal Holstein 4/6 * Chicken Saute Fermiere 5/6
* Supreme of Chicken Princesse 6/- * Salmi of Duckling Chasseur 5/6
* Entrecôte Marchand de Vin 4/6 Wiener Schnitzel 4/-
* Supreme de Volaille Alexandra 6/6 Boiled Chicken and Ham 5/6
Chicken in Casserole 6/-

Roasts

Roast Chicken and Sausage 5/- Roast Turkey and Ham 5/6 Roast Chicken and Ham 5/6
Roast Pheasant Roast Grouse Roast Duckling 5/- Wild Duck Roast Partridge

Cold Meats

Roast Beef 2/6 Ham and Tongue 3/- Mayonnaise of Chicken 6/-
Roast Lamb 3/- Chicken and Ham 5/-

FROM THE GRILL

Fillet Steak 4/- Rump Steak 3/- Point Steak 3/6 Mutton Cutlets (2) 3/- Loin Chop 3/-
Chump Chop 2/6 Kidney and Sausage 2/6
Mixed Grill 4/- Porterhouse Steak (2 persons) 9/6 Grilled Chicken and Sausage 5/6
Lamb Cutlets 3/- Minute Steak 3/- Grilled Kidney 1/6 Entrecote Béarnaise 3/6

Vegetables

Boiled, Jacket or Mashed Potatoes, 6d Saute 6d Fried 6d Rissole Potatoes 9d
Lyonnaise and Au Gratin Potatoes 1/- Cauliflower 1/6 Spinach 1/6 French Beans 1/6
Braized Celery 1/6 Tomatoes Onions Saute 1/6 French Fried Onions 1/6 Brussells Sprouts 1/6
Garden Peas 1/6

Salads

Lettuce 1/- Potato 9d. Beetroot 1/- French Salad 1/6
Italienne 1/6 Tomatoes 1/6

Sweets

Fruit Salad 3/6 Meringues Chantilly 1/6 Apple Tart and Cream 2/-
Trifle Chantilly 1/6 * Jam Omelette 3/- * Rum Omelette 3/6
* Vanilla or Chocolate Souffle 3/- Vanilla Ice 1/3 Peach Melba 3/6
Pear Helene 3/6 Meringues Glace 1/6 Omelette Surprise 3/-
Crèpe Suzette 5/6

Savouries

Chicken Liver on Toast 1/6 Buck Rarebit 1/9 Welsh Rarebit 1/6
Mushrooms on Toast - Devils on Horseback 2/6 Angels on Horseback 3/-

Cheese

Cheddar 6d. Cream Cheese 6d.
Coffee 6d. Cocoa 9d. Chocolate 9d. Cream 9d.

It is illegal to serve Butter at Luncheon and/or Dinner.

DISHES MARKED THUS * NOT AVAILABLE AFTER 9 P.M.

With Hors-d'Œuvre drink water
to disarm
Malicious vinegar, thief of wine's
charm.
Fine, dry white Burgundy and
soup are friends
But if an omelette is served, then
much depends
Upon the choice of the consumer
With appropriate wine the eggs
to humour.

When Oysters, Caviare the table
grace,
Let Chablis, Alsace keep the pace,
Meursault, Traminer of light
complexion
Accompany Fish to great perfection,
While Roast and Grills of succulent splendour
Demand ruby Claret, Burgundy
for neighbour.

When Poultry delicately invites
the fork
A light red wine you may uncork.
Seasonal Game will turn in scorn
From all but vintages highly
born;
But Cheese, alone in tolerance
Most all wines' qualities will
enhance.

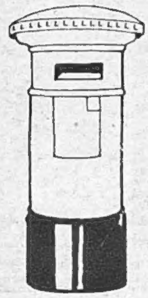
Desserts with sweeter wines
consort
Accepting Sauternes as comely
escort,
A friandise will please the two,
Although her preference is with
Anjou,
Whilst Fruit your palate will
entrance
When Champagne is allowed to
dance.

HOW THEY EAT IN NEUTRAL EIRE!

This menu is not a pre-war document preserved from those far-off days when meals were meals and gourmets could pore over a noble choice of dishes and select the perfect repast. Believe it or not, it is a typical menu from a well-known Dublin hotel. You can order as many of these succulent dishes as you like at one meal. You may be sure, too, that the eggs are eggs—none of the powdered variety are needed in Ireland! There's no lack of cooking fats to produce sauces and so forth, and indeed there's only one restriction—butter must not be served at lunch or dinner. Isn't it funny?—BUT IT'S TRUE!

Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—I dreamed the other night that I went to a party given by Lady B. in her old home which she sold six years ago. It was a rather dull party, which Lady B.'s parties in real life never are, and we all stood about eyeing each other suspiciously until she said, "Now we will have some FOOD."

Everybody brightened at these words, for even sandwiches with a scraping of margarine and fish-paste in them are better than nothing these days. But when we went into the dining-room there was a Groaning Board. Hams, Tongues, Meat Patties, Things in Aspic, and breasts of chicken were on one table, and on the other—and it was towards this one that I was drawn as by a magnet—were Trifles with Cream inches thick on the top, Meringues with Cream bulging out of them, Éclairs with Cream oozing out of them, Soufflés with Cream blobbed on top of them, great bowls of Devonshire Cream with the thick yellow blanket on top of them, and jugs of ordinary Driddley Cream.

"'I had just made up my mind to try a little of everything.'"

When I told my dream to Lady B., the mere sound of these magic words made our mouths fill with what the Doctors call saliva and I call spit, and we had to keep swallowing and swallowing.

"Which did you have, Henrietta?" said Lady B. faintly.

"I had just made up my mind to try a little of everything when I woke up."

"Oh, Henrietta!"

"I know. Psychologists call it frustration."

"Frustration—I should say so!"

"I cried."

"That hardly surprises me."

"Charles woke up and said, 'Why are you crying, Henrietta?' When I told him he said he felt like a good cry himself. In the end I got up and made some tea and we had half a biscuit each."

"It's a horrible story," said Lady B., shuddering, and there was a long silence.

Then Faith came in and said, "What are you talking about?" as she always does.

"Food," we said simply.

"Ah," said Faith, and sat down and gazed moodily into the middle distance. After another long silence she said, "I wish I'd never married the Conductor."

"Faith!" we said, deeply shocked by this remark.

"Well, I do," said Faith. "He's sweet and I adore him, and he's the father of my children, but he's always in for a meal in the middle of the day."

"I know what you mean, Faith," I said. "Charles is too."

"Other husbands go off in the morning," said Faith; "they go to some restaurant at one o'clock and have a terrific blow-out meal—probably beef-steak-and-kidney pudding" (Faith paused and swallowed twice), "followed by a treacle roll. Then they come home in the evening to a dainty little rationed meal and say, 'Darling, I think you're wonderful! We always seem to have plenty of food.'"

"And at week-ends," I said (for this was a subject to which I had given a good deal of thought), "they go and play golf and get two more good meals in a Club House."

"And on Saturday nights they take their wives out to dinner so as to give the Little Women a break. Look at me," said Faith, her blue eyes flashing, "I can't be taken out to dinner, because of the children."

Lady B. and I made sympathetic noises.

"The Conductor digs madly in the garden all the morning, and at one o'clock he comes in like a ravening lion, seeking whom he may devour."

"And where does half a pound of corned beef go to then?"

"Why don't you try a meal in our new Cliff Restaurant?" said Lady B. "Children and all. You could take Augustus's food with you."

"That's an idea," said Faith. "I wonder what it's like."

"Jolly good," I said. "I looked through the window the other day and what do you think they were having?"

"WHAT?" said Lady B. and Faith, leaning forward.

"Roast veal," I said, "and baked potatoes and cabbage, and then they had the choice of plum tart or milk pudding."

"They didn't!" said Faith, and Lady B. took out her handkerchief and wiped her lips.

"The Savernacks were there, having a jolly good tuck-in. Mr. Savernack had milk pudding and Mrs. Savernack had plum tart, and she gave him some of her plum tart and he gave her some of his milk pudding."

"What a *good* idea," said Lady B.

"I don't know whether they had coffee or not. The waitress asked them, but Mrs. Savernack saw me and gave me a Look, so I came away. You see, she was one who opposed the British Restaurant. She said everybody ought to be able to manage on their rations."

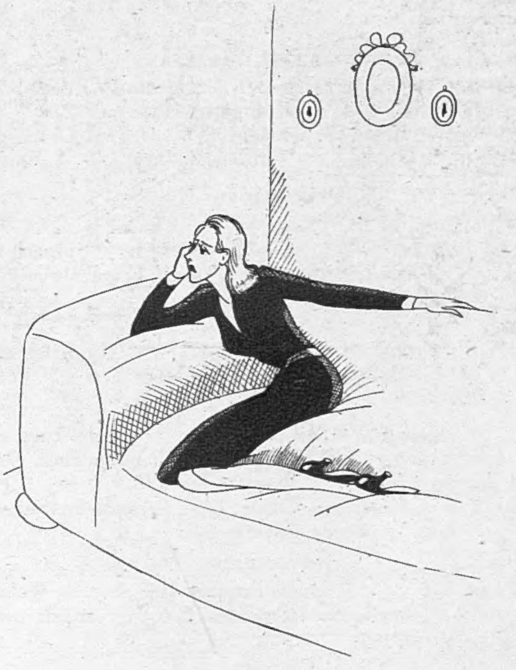
A few days later Faith and the Conductor and Little No-well and Augustus (who brought his sieved spinach with him) and Lady B. and Charles and I went to luncheon at the Cliff Restaurant. We had boiled beef and carrots and onions and potatoes, and the choice of castle puddings or chocolate shape, and we sent out for beer from the Pub next door and orange-squash for Little No-well. The Conductor looked so lean and hungry that we each gave him a little piece of beef and he said he felt like a boa-constrictor. Little No-well, who was having her first meat meal away from home, was wildly excited and spilt her orange drink all over the table-cloth. Augustus ploughed steadily through his spinach.

It was a gay party. The table was so small that our knees were pressed together under it, and the little room grew warm, so that moisture ran down the windows. Colonel and Mrs. Simpkins pressed their faces to the glass outside, and we held up our plates to show them what we were eating. I told my dream and the Conductor said,

Henrietta
Said she felt better.
She had such a
wonderful dream,
She dreamed
she was swimming
—in cream.

Always your
affectionate
Childhood's
Friend,

HENRIETTA.



"'I wish I'd never married the Conductor.'"

"Colonel and Mrs. Simpkins pressed their faces to the glass."

GREATEST DOWNHILL SKI-RACE— THE PARSENN DERBY.

The most gruelling race of the Swiss ski-ing season, THE PARSENN DERBY, *was won this year by M. Jean Blanc, who made it in 14 min. 0·5 sec. The race was started in 1924 by an Englishman, Mr. Fred W. Edlin, and it has now become a popular Swiss institution; every year 300 to 500 skiers take part; thousands of spectators line the course. The Parsenn Derby starts nowadays on the Weissfluh peak (2,800 m.), covers a distance of 7½ miles, ends in Küblis, almost 8000 ft. lower. The speed record on this terrific course is 13 min. 27 sec.*

EVENTS AND PEOPLE OF THE WEEK:

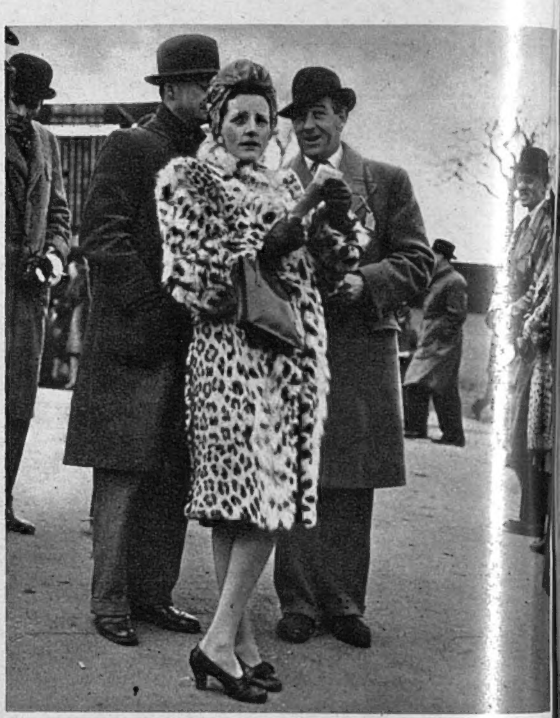
AIR VICE-MARSHAL BORTON, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., *watched the famous Parsenn Ski Derby in Switzerland, with* MISS NATHALIE BIRD.

MISS ELIZABETH BIRD *and her father,* MAJOR HOWARD BIRD, *were among the English visitors who saw the Parsenn Derby this year.*

The first post-war National Hunt Meeting at Cheltenham drew a huge crowd to see fine sport. MISS FARLEY, CAPTAIN FARLEY, MISS HARRISON *and* MISS TOWERS-CLARK *are in this group.*

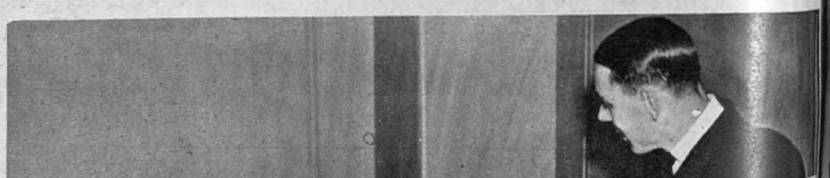
MR. CARL WINTER, *Deputy Keeper of Paintings at the Victoria and Albert Museum, has been appointed Director of the Fitzwilliam, Cambridge, in succession to Mr. Louis Clarke.*

MISS ANNE CUMMING BELL, *twenty-one-year-old daughter of Major and Mrs. W. Cumming Bell, Binham Lodge, Edgerton, Huddersfield, is engaged to the Duke of Rutland, Belvoir Castle.*



MRS. RONALD GEE *wore an ocelot coat and a silk square arranged turban-wise on her head, at the N.H. Meeting, Cheltenham, which opened in cold, fine weather.*

MISS MARY EMMET, *débutante daughter of the Hon. Mrs. Garland Emmet, wore, at her coming-out dance, a dress devised for her from a model worn by her grandmother, Viscountess Portman.*



This group of MISS MARGARET CRIPPS, MAJOR BARCLAY HANKIN, MISS HEATHER DRANE *and* LIEUT. T. G. TICKLER *was taken at the cocktail party given by Mrs. Rennie O'Mahony for her pupils, the "Cygnets," of Dunluce House, before going to the Victory Ball.*

SPORT SOCIAL FUNCTIONS AND WEDDINGS.

A keen wind blew at Cheltenham, so fur coats were all the wear. This trio consists of MRS. RICHARD WROTTESLEY, COL. D. K. CAMPBELL *and* CAPT. P. G. GREY.

PRINCESS ELIZABETH, *accompanied by her grandmother, Queen Mary, visited the Kayser-Bondor works to see specimen nylon stockings being made for the home market. Both royal ladies received a pair, against which they arranged to send coupons.*

MRS. MANSELL'S *sheepskin coat was guaranteed to keep out the cold winds at Cheltenham. She was snapped with* MRS. PETER VAUX.

LADY ELIZABETH MONTAGU-DOUGLAS-SCOTT, *elder daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, is engaged to the Duke of Northumberland.*

MRS. JOYCE PORTER, *widow of Sub-Lieut. (A.) C. Porter, R.N.V.R., is engaged to Major Gordon McFall, M.C., R.H.A., eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. McFall, of Well Manor, Long Sutton, Hants.*

MISS JANE RUSSELL, MR. RAYMOND CARR, MR. D. PAUST *were at the cocktail party given by Mrs. Rennie O'Mahony, of Dunluce Girls' Finishing School, before going to the Victory Ball in aid of the National Association of Boys' Clubs.*

MAJOR *the* HON. D. C. CHICHESTER, M.C., *Coldstream Guards, younger son of Lord Templemore, married* MRS. RICHARD TWINING, *only daughter of Captain M. Ravenhill, last week at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge.*

STAGE CAMEOS.

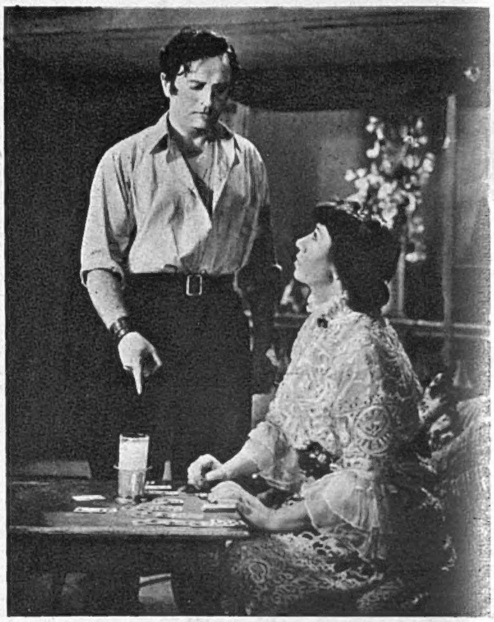
By JOHN RUSSELL.

THE most important news of the month can be summarised, after the fashion of the *Continental Daily Mail*, in the phrase "MISS RUTH DRAPER has arrived at the Apollo Theatre." Miss Draper's season has still another week to run—another week in which one may enjoy the dry sharpness of her observation, the hidden skill of her performances, and the sudden pot-holes of sentiment upon which one is perennially surprised to stumble. It is a symptom of our present overcrowding that this great virtuoso can be seen only at matinées.

That amiable and vivacious parliamentarian Mr. Beverley Baxter has written of "SONG OF NORWAY," the new musical play at the Palace, that it stirred in him "forgotten depths of emotion." The American authors of this piece, Mr. Milton Lazarus and Mr. Homer Curran, may have been pardonably surprised by this tribute. "Jeez, Homer," one imagines Mr. Lazarus saying, "if that doesn't beat the bugs!" I shall not myself beat the bugs by saying that this piece goes deeper, say, than the play by Sean O'Casey, which Mr. Hawtrey has courageously put on at Swiss Cottage; but I found a good deal in it to enjoy. It is, for example, the first musical comedy in which Ibsen appears on the stage. (Those who wish to follow up their acquaintance with this hairy old chatterbox can see one of his greatest and most disturbing plays, "The Lady From the Sea," at the Arts Theatre.) "Song of Norway" is in many respects a kindergarten version of "Peer Gynt"—the same wandering Nordic hero, the same temptations of flesh and ambition, the same sweet, faithful morsel waiting for the hero to come to his senses. The same composer too; the fragments from Grieg's instrumental works prove surprisingly indestructible, hurled as they are from mouth to mouth above the agreeable din of Mr. Gideon Fagan's orchestra. Several very estimable singers have been recruited for the production; and if their histrionic attempts have sometimes the effect of a grotesque parody, the general good-heartedness of "Song of Norway," the clean red-and-white of Norwegian costume and the really exceptional decency of the book make this a memorable evening. Mr. John Pegram shows himself, in a tiny part, a dancer worthy of the "Good-Humoured Ladies" in a Diaghilev production; the other dancers do not distinguish themselves, and "Anitra's Dance," in particular, is rendered almost ludicrous by the precautionary removal of its powerful sexual charge.

Mr. O'Casey's plays, with their wonderful jet of imaginative rhetoric, perform one of the main functions of the theatre, in that they enhance and enrich the spoken language of their time. An erratic symbolism has recently disguised this author's great command of the stage; but although I have only read "RED ROSES FOR ME," I am ready to back it unseen as one of the most exciting plays in London.

Passionate political discussion is confined, in England, to a small minority; and this, rather than any censorial scruple, is responsible for the rarity, upon our stage, of plays based upon serious political subjects. Audiences are still drawn mostly from that vast, dozy section of the public which is well content with things (and with themselves) as they are; coals rarely leap out of the political fire to set such audiences alight.



Based on Francis Brett Young's novel, "A Man About the House" (Piccadilly) presents FLORA ROBSON as *Agnes Isit, an elderly woman who inherits a villa in Italy, marries and is poisoned by her butler, the rascally Salvatore Ferraro* (BASIL SYDNEY). *Both play the piece brilliantly, admirably supported by Ernest Thesiger, Frank Tickle, Patricia Hastings.*

"FIFTY-FIFTY," the new farce at the Strand, conceals a tiny needle of anti-Socialist opinion within the warm haystack of Mr. Harry Green's accomplished comicality; but a more surprising event is the opening, at the Scala Theatre, Charlotte Street, of a season of avowedly left-wing plays, under the patronage of several distinguished publicists. This paintable, foreign-seeming street, with its garland of excellent restaurants, is now the home of plays by Mr. Montagu Slater, the librettist of "Peter Grimes," and that wonderful buffoon and admirable Iago, Mr. Bernard Miles. (And speaking of Iago, watch for Mr. Wolfit's appearance in that part, against Mr. Valk's Othello—a collision of Samsonian giants.)

Of "A MAN ABOUT THE HOUSE," at the Piccadilly, my colleague Lawrence Gowing writes: "This Brett Young adaptation has the most substantial performance that I have seen for months. Mr. Basil Sydney gives a fascinating credibility to his insidious animal influence. The ingratiating antics of this major-domo barely hide the shadowy greed of the Italian peasant. Plausible and in every sense poisonous, he has in Miss Flora Robson, stiffly upright in the frame of a father's tyranny, the most poignant of victims. When the confession of love comes tearing out of her (a moment in which all Miss Robson's power to move is brought into play), we fear, expect and get the worst. But the convolutions of the spell, punctuated by Mr. Ernest Thesiger's bath-water giggle, have us completely in their grasp. Perhaps the story flags a little, where the leisurely pace of the novel takes away from the urgency of the play; and Miss Robson, ending the piece with an ironic cadence worthy of a minor Russian novelist, adds a further distracting element. But it is none the less an evening of high excitement; and if Mr. Wyndham Goldie can resist the temptation to exploit his bedside manner by putting up his own brass-plate, then he and others can count on staying at the Piccadilly for many months to come."

Above: In "Romeo and Juliet" RENÉE ASHERSON *plays Juliet to perfection in the Travelling Repertory Theatre's (T.R.T.) production at the King's Theatre, Hammersmith. It is her first part in a great classical rôle, and recalls the excellence of her performance as the Princess in the "Henry V" film.*

Right: ESMOND KNIGHT'S *swaggering Mercutio in the T.R.T. production of "Romeo and Juliet" has tremendous substance and virility. His spirited duel with Tybalt is remarkable for its perceptive energy.*

PLAYS YOU MUST SEE: OLD VIC THEATRE COMPANY SEASON OF REPERTORY (New). "HAPPY AND GLORIOUS" (Palladium). "PRIVATE LIVES" (Apollo). "WHILE THE SUN SHINES" (Globe). "THE FIRST GENTLEMAN" (Savoy). "ME AND MY GIRL" (Victoria Palace). "UNDER THE COUNTER" (Phœnix). SADLER'S WELLS BALLET SEASON (Covent Garden). "RED ROSES FOR ME" (Embassy).

PLAYS WELL WORTH SEEING: "THE YEARS BETWEEN" (Wyndham's). "LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN" (Haymarket). "FOR CRYING OUT LOUD" (Stoll). "PERCHANCE TO DREAM" (Hippodrome). "THE NIGHT AND THE MUSIC" (Coliseum). "THE HASTY HEART" (Aldwych). "NO MEDALS" (Vaudeville). "DUET FOR TWO HANDS" (Lyric). "LADY FROM EDINBURGH" (Playhouse). "SEE HOW THEY RUN" (Comedy). "THE SHOP AT SLY CORNER" (St. Martin's). "IS YOUR HONEYMOON REALLY NECESSARY?" (Duke of York's). "FOLLOW THE GIRLS" (His Majesty's). "MERRIE ENGLAND" (Princes). "FINE FEATHERS" (Prince of Wales). OPERA SEASON (Sadler's Wells). "WORM'S EYE VIEW" (Whitehall). WOLFIT SHAKESPEARE SEASON (Winter Garden). "STAGE DOOR" (Saville). "THE GUINEA-PIG" (Criterion). "A MAN ABOUT THE HOUSE" (Piccadilly). "SONG OF NORWAY" (Palace). "DEAR RUTH" (St. James's). "FIFTY-FIFTY" (Strand). "THE SACRED FLAME" (Westminster).

PANTOMIME: "CINDERELLA" (Adelphi).

While every endeavour is made to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

STRANGE and inscrutable are the ways of film producers. Consider the case of "ADVENTURE," the new film at the Empire. This is the piece that brings Clark Gable back to the screen, after his years at the wars. Mr. Gable, the producers clearly argued, had been away from the picture public for a perilously long time. In the circumstances, they very wisely cast Mr. Gable with a star, Greer Garson, whose popularity was at the top of the poll. To embrace Miss Garson, they argued, to have Miss Garson twinkling right up into your eyes, is clearly box-office therapy for any war-worn actor.

So far, so good. But now mark what they do. They take an old hotch-potch of farce and fable, strain it to the point of absurdity, dress it up in airy-fairy nonsense dialogue, inject a couple of scenes of domestic melodrama that would have made Mrs. Henry Wood blench and tremble, and turn it loose on a public that has been, during the last few years, in reasonably close contact with life's sterner verities. The result is a picture that leaves this particular Gable fan distressed. To my mind, "Adventure," instead of throwing a life-line to Clark Gable, has simply tossed Mr. Gable and Miss Garson into the soup together, to sink or swim.

BING CROSBY *as Father O'Malley and* INGRID BERGMAN *as Sister Benedict star in "The Bells of St. Mary's" (Carlton). The pair gently spar and try to outwit each other over the rehabilitation of a parochial school.*

"Adventure" is about a rough-and-tumble merchant seaman who turns up in a public library one day, looking for a soul for his buddy (Thomas Mitchell). The buddy has lost his soul through making vows he could not hope to fulfil, after being torpedoed by a Jap submarine. Behind the desk in the library he finds Miss Garson, cool and demure in a pinafore frock and horn-rimmed glasses. Miss Garson, we are told, has been "a perfectly happy librarian" until she meets Mr. Gable. But now he looks deep into her eyes, and sees the ocean in them, a phenomenon he has never observed before in the eyes of any woman. As a result, they go to Reno and get married, and Mr. Mitchell's lost soul is temporarily forgotten. (For the records, I may say that it comes back to him later in the form of a shooting-star.)

After a few days of that breezy, bonhomous companionship that passes on the screen for marriage, Mr. Gable decides to return to sea, and Miss Garson, sooner than enter into any argument that involves a mental effort, agrees to divorce him. At this point, the betting round me began to get lively on the patter of tiny feet. Two to one was being offered, when Miss Garson suddenly keeled over, and the family doctor, with a knowing leer, assured the audience there was nothing to worry about, nothing whatever. Last scene of all in this outstanding piece of nonsense is Mr. Gable's return from sea, just in time to save his still-born baby by whispering to him, "Breathe for me, pal." At which the baby, whom any practical woman would have held up by the heels and thumped on the back, began to breathe, whimper, nay, scream the place down; the only proper comment, I felt, on this preposterous film.

BETTE DAVIS *stars as Miss Moffat in Warner's screen version of the Emlyn Williams play "The Corn is Green" (Warner, March 22).* JOHN DALL *is Morgan Evans, the brilliant young miner whom she is so anxious to send to Oxford in spite of the love complications in which he has become involved.*

"LEAVE HER TO HEAVEN" (Odeon) is a better-constructed picture than "Adventure," and not quite as silly, but you can scarcely call it edifying. At least, it does not come into the category of edification in my mind to see a young woman scattering human ashes on a mountain-top, breaking her mother's heart, jilting her fiancé (a bit of a stuffed shirt, no doubt, but strictly upright and devoted) in order to marry a complete stranger at two days' notice, drowning her crippled brother-in-law, throwing herself downstairs to kill her unborn child, and finally committing suicide by arsenic poisoning in such a way that her sister is accused of murder. To my taste, this Ellen is a clear case for a psychiatrist, not for a motion-picture producer with millions of simple and often silly people to entertain.

On the credit side it may be said that the technical development of the story holds you. "Leave Her to Heaven" is never niggardly of incident. Something keeps happening all the time, and there is a certain fascination in watching Ellen's sins pile up; in conjecturing what in the world this fantastic young woman will next be up to. Miss Gene Tierney, who plays her, may be a bit shaky as an actress, but she knows how to wear clothes, and clothes are a very positive factor in "Leave Her to Heaven." Every sin has its appropriate costume, and you cannot grudge a certain admiration to a woman who dresses for supper or a murder so becomingly. If it comes to that, Miss Jeanne Crain, who plays the victimised sister, is no slouch either. Her costumes, though guileless, are trim, and I noticed with pleasure that she brightened up a lot when she got into the dock, changing her outfit for each day of the trial. Mr. Cornel Wilde, who plays the husband, is supposed to be colour-blind, but that doesn't stop him from indulging in sartorial harmonies of russet and midnight blue.

"The Bride Wasn't Willing" (Leicester Square, March 25) in Technicolor, is a story of murderous cowboys, marriage and kidnapping. YVONNE DE CARLO *plays Lorena Dumont, who runs the Red Horse saloon. Rod Cameron co-stars.*

Two methods of celebrating the life and works of an honoured composer are demonstrated in the London cinemas this week. At the Curzon, the French pay tribute to their own Hector Berlioz in "LA SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE." This is a conventionally told, highly inaccurate but brilliantly musicked account of the composer's public and private life, from the time when he arrived in Paris as a reluctant medical student, to the moment when he assisted at his great "Requiem." Jean-Louis Barrault, a young actor with an intense nervous energy, plays Berlioz on a high-pitched febrile note that gives the part sharpness without depth, and left me feeling that nothing would have done this petulant Hector more good than a dozen of the best with a cane in boyhood. The direction is full of clichés, and the story bears about as much resemblance to the real life of Berlioz as mine does to Betty Grable's. On the other hand, the effect of the music is magnificent; there is plenty of it, and it is gloriously played and splendidly sung by those huge orchestras and massed choirs that Berlioz loved.

Paramount's "Our Hearts Were Growing Up" (Plaza, March 22). Meeting rough-sailing in what should be a smooth sea of love, sub-debs. Cornelia Otis Skinner (GAIL RUSSELL, *right) and Emily Kimbrough* (DIANA LYNN) *decide to become careerists. Brian Donlevy and William Demarest, bootleggers, solve their problems for them.*

"THE GREAT VICTOR HERBERT," at the Plaza, is a revival of an American film we saw before the war, with Walter Connolly as the composer, Mary Martin and Allan Jones as the principal singers, and Susanna Foster making her début as a fourteen-year-old. The producers have obviated the difficulties of giving a true account of the life of Victor Herbert, by not giving an account of the life of Victor Herbert at all. Mr. Connolly hovers round in the background, perennially middle-aged and kindly, but the film is really about a famous operatic tenor and an unknown soprano who meet and marry under the influence of his music. They quarrel and separate; he goes down the ladder of success as she goes up; and fifteen or sixteen years and about twenty lilting numbers later, they forget their differences in the excitement of their daughter's début. The final scene, with the coltish daughter singing her first Victor Herbert lead on the stage; Daddy, with tears in his eyes, encouraging her from the front row of the chorus; and Mummy, her emotions heightened by laryngitis, clutching her throat in the wings, is one of the most striking family reunions I ever remember on the screen.

NO-COUPON DANCE DRESS OF HEIRLOOM SILK.

MISS LAURA GRENFELL, *youngest daughter of Lieut.-Colonel Arthur Morton Grenfell, D.S.O., and of Mrs. Morton Grenfell, wore this dress at the dance which her parents gave for her recently. It was a "no-coupon model" made from the train worn by her aunt Miss D. Grenfell, when she was presented to Queen Victoria in 1889. Princess Elizabeth was the principal guest at this private dance.*

PHOTOGRAPH SPECIALLY TAKEN BY LENARE.

DÉBUTANTE IN HER COMING-OUT DANCE FROCK.

LADY ELIZABETH FITZMAURICE, *younger daughter of the late Marquess of Lansdowne and of Lady Colum Crichton-Stuart, wore this dress at the coming-out dance which her mother and step-father gave for her at the Dorchester. The party was honoured by the presence of H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth. Lady Elizabeth, who is in her nineteenth year, has one sister, Lady Katherine Bigham. Her step-father. Lord Colum Crichton-Stuart, is a brother of the Marquess of Bute.*

PHOTOGRAPH SPECIALLY TAKEN BY LENARE.

HUMPHREY BOGART, *sometimes known as "The Menace," and his wife,* LAUREN BACALL, *or "The Look," own this trim yacht, "Santana," and are just off for a cruise.*

LAUREN BACALL *has been learning seamanship from her husband, Humphrey Bogart. Good sailors keep things shipshape, and she's packing the sail locker with expert neatness.*

"THE MENACE" AND "THE LOO

HUMPHREY BOGART, picturesquely known in Hollywood as "The Menace," and his lovely young wife, LAUREN BACALL, are happiest when in each other's company aboard their yacht, Santana, a 55-ft. yawl which he recently acquired. Bogart is a keen and skilful yachtsman and is teaching his wife all he knows about seamanship. She's an apt pupil and acts as First Mate on their cruises. Sometimes they invite a couple of friends to come along, but mostly it's just

The relationship between the Skipper and his First Mate is very happy. She dutifully says "Aye, aye, Sir," and is rapidly acquiring skill.

The "Santana" took part in the Bermuda and Honolulu yacht races before Humphrey Bogart acquired her, and he may race her again.

N.B. A Coloured plate is inserted in this issue.

And here FIRST MATE BACALL *is absorbing the correct technique of making fast round a bollard. She's a real outdoor girl, with blonde, tawny hair and blue-green eyes.*

Full sail! "The Look" gazes aloft as the sails fill, and stands by for orders from the skipper as their yacht, the "Santana," heads out to sea.

ENJOY THEIR FAVOURITE SPORT.

Skipper and Mate who go out to sea. It will be remembered that Miss Bacall was "discovered" by Mrs. Howard Hawkes, wife of the Warner Bros. director, who first saw "The Look" gazing at her from the pages of a fashion magazine. She played opposite Bogart in "To Have and Have Not," and stole the picture. Shortly afterwards she married Humphrey, and they are playing together in "The Big Sleep." They have a home in Beverly Hills, but prefer to be aboard their yacht.

First Mate Lauren Bacall is tying the furled sail down to the boom under the watchful eye of Skipper Bogart. She knows all about sailors' knots.

First Mate Bacall is learning exactly how to furl a sail, and proves herself an apt pupil. She and Bogart have been making a new picture, "The Big Sleep."

"HOW DO I LOOK, MUMMY?"

MARGARET LOCKWOOD *and her four-year-old daughter,* MARGARET JULIA, *appear as mother and daughter in the Two Cities' production of " Hungry Hill;" based on Daphne du Maurier's novel. Julia and her mother are gazing into the mirror in order to study the starlet's appearance in one of her costumes for the film. Brian Desmond Hurst is directing " Hungry Hill," which gives Margaret Lockwood one of the best parts of her career. Her recent successes include " The Wicked Lady" and " A Place of One's Own." In both 1944 and 1945 she was placed high among the first ten money-making stars in British films, by the Motion Picture Herald's Poll.*

Blonde MISS RHONDDA KELLY, winner of the "Miss Australia" title, will travel the world as a goodwill ambassador.

The six finalists as they appeared before the judges: L. to r.—Miss Western Australia (JEAN WITFORD), who finished third; Miss Australia (RHONDDA KELLY), winner; Miss South Australia (HELEN MOODY); Miss Tasmania (DOREEN TAMSAY); Miss New South Wales (BARBARA AVERY), who ran second; and Miss Victoria (BETTY JOAN TUCK).

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

"MISS AUSTRALIA," for the beauty which has won her "ambassadorial" status.

AFTER severe tests the thousand competitors in Australia's Beauty Contest were reduced to six. The panel of distinguished judges included doctors, artists, photographers, a sculptor, theatrical, educational, and physical culture representatives. They took four hours to make their decision; in the final the girls paraded in swim-suits, evening gowns, day clothes; were "grilled" individually, and from this terrific competition MISS RHONDDA KELLY emerged the winner. The judges allotted points for education, personality, voice, deportment; beauty, photographic possibilities, and sport; the first four points being given high priority to ensure that beside having a good figure, the winner would be polished; able to talk intelligently. "Miss Australia" will tour the world as a goodwill ambassador; in America she will be the guest of M.G.M. A £250 wardrobe, present from the Australian Wool Board, will show the beautiful products which are made from Australian wool. Her extensive visit abroad will cost about £2,000.

The crowd surged round "Miss Australia" and finalists from other States touring Sydney in a DUKW from the British aircraft-carrier "Implacable."

RHONDDA KELLY showed her finely tapering fingers to one of the judges, Mr. Howard Ashton. For the six finalists the judging was long, exacting.

JOAN CRAWFORD WON HER OSCAR IN "MILDRED PIERCE."

In "Mildred Pierce" (due Warner Theatre, April 26) JOAN CRAWFORD *won her Academy Award for the best film-actress performance in 1945. After a quarrel with her husband, Mildred* (JOAN CRAWFORD) *opens a café to support her children Kay* (JO ANN MARLOWE, *left) and Veda* (ANN BLYTH).

Mildred meets Monty Beragon (ZACHARY SCOTT) *decadent son of a prominent family; enjoys his company. She becomes wealthy, and "loans" money to Beragon till he is virtually a "kept" man. Kay dies, and worthless Veda is now her only child.*

Left: Mildred marries Beragon; but this does not prevent an affair between him and Veda, who, now a blackmailer, is found by Mildred well on in a love-affair. Veda tells Mildred Beragon is going to divorce her and marry herself. Beragon laughs; and is later discovered shot dead.

Right: Veda refuses at first to tell her mother the story of Beragon's death; but later confesses her love for him, saying she killed him when he refused to marry her.

Mildred is stopped by the police trying to get away after the murder is discovered at the Malibu Beach House.

Facing the police Mildred tries in vain to take the blame for Veda's crime, but already the girl has been apprehended at the air-port in an attempt to escape, and Mildred goes home alone.

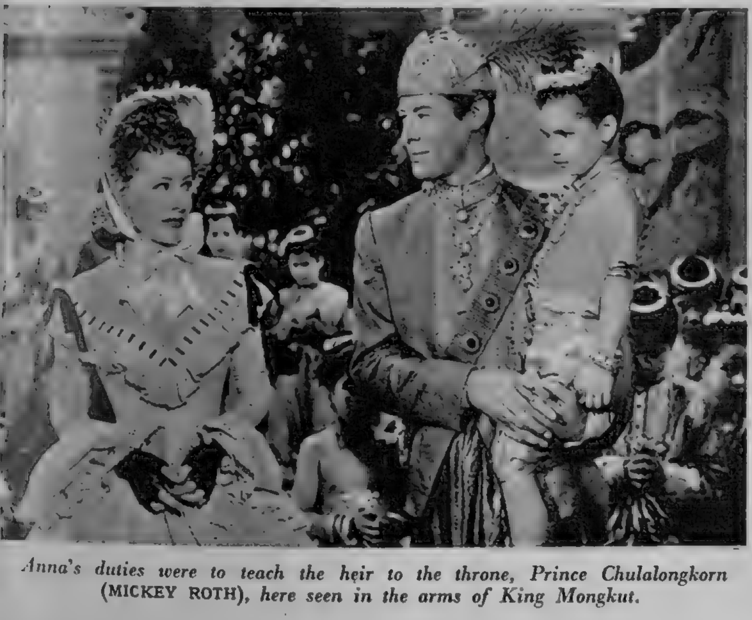
REX HARRISON AS THE KING OF SIAM.

"ANNA AND THE KING OF SIAM" is the film based on Margaret Landon's recent book, which tells the story of Anna Leonowens' extraordinary adventures in the 1860s when she went to Bangkok to teach the children of the King of Siam. King Mongkut, her employer, was an amazing personality, a ruthless Oriental autocrat, cruel, yet cultivated, and completely unrestrained in his furious rages; and Rex Harrison has a tremendous part in re-creating him. Anna Leonowens never showed any fear of Mongkut, and upheld the dignity of the English with superb Victorian calm.

King Mongkut was a ruthless Oriental tyrant, who could sentence those who offended him to horrible tortures and death, but he was also a student, and spent hours in his library.

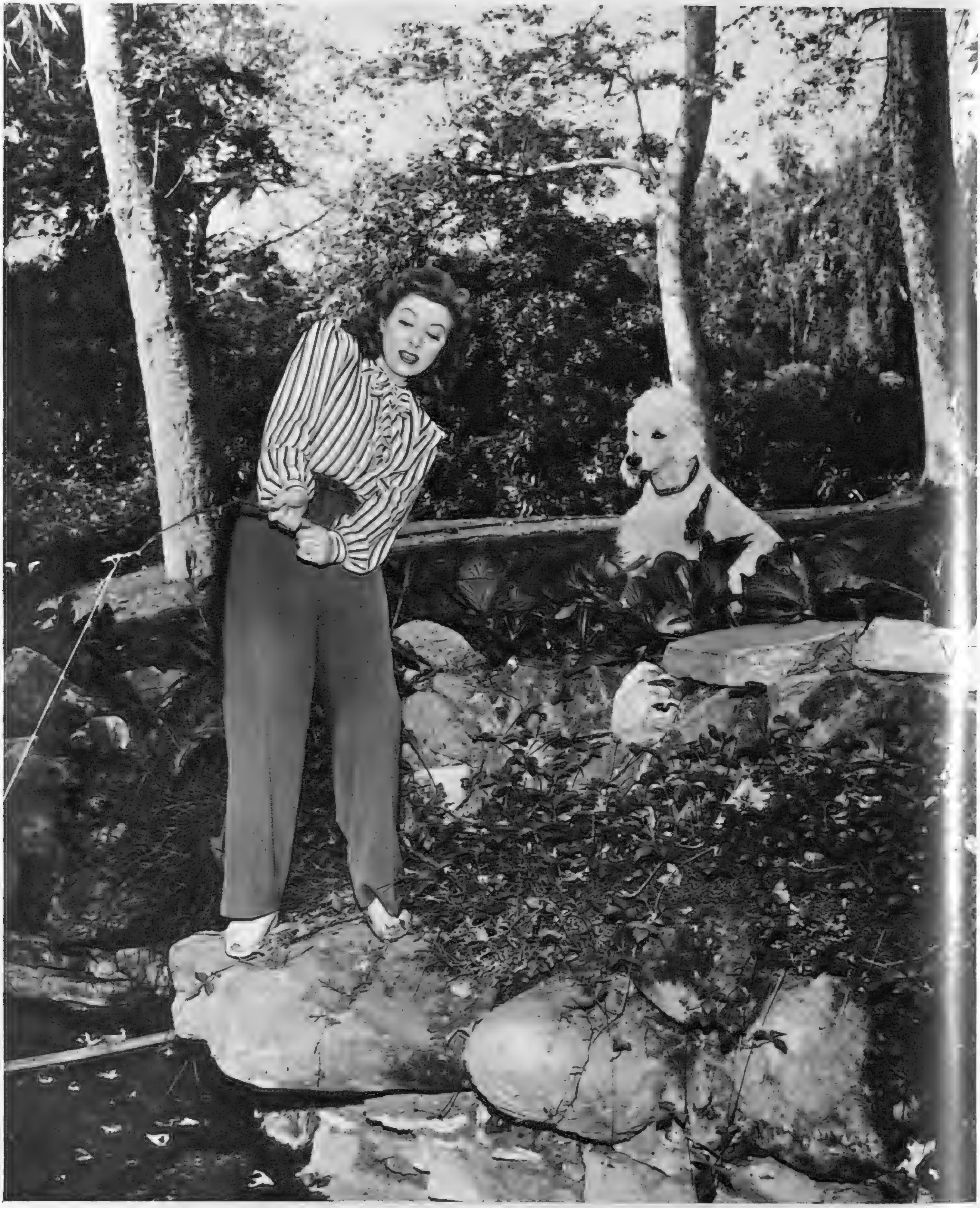
REX HARRISON *plays King Mongkut of Siam in 20th Century-Fox's production,* "ANNA AND THE KING OF SIAM." *He is with Tuptim* (LINDA DARNELL), *the beautiful slave.*

Anna Leonowens (IRENE DUNNE), *the English governess, accompanied by her son Louis* (RICHARD LYON), *did not prostrate herself when presented to the King, but made a stately curtsey.*



Anna's duties were to teach the heir to the throne, Prince Chulalongkorn (MICKEY ROTH), *here seen in the arms of King Mongkut.*

REX HARRISON *as King Mongkut in full state. Dressed in cloth of gold, he looks as if he had been carved all of one piece with his glittering golden throne.*



GREER GARSON VERY MUCH AT HOME IN HOLLYWOOD.

M.-G.-M. star GREER GARSON *has a very fine estate in Hollywood: adores doing a bit of work on it, and spends as much time out of doors as her busy screen life allows. Her charming poodle likes being out and about too. Some of her outstanding films you will remember were "Mrs. Miniver," "Madame Curie," "Mrs. Parkington," and "The Valley of Decision." She married Richard Ney in 1943.*

"Love, if thy tresses be so dark, how dark those hidden eyes must be"; *Prince Florimund* (ROBERT HELPMANN) *wakes Princess Aurora* (MARGOT FONTEYN) *from her hundred-years sleep.*

FAMOUS FAIRY-TALE FOLK AT COVENT GARDEN.

"THE SLEEPING BEAUTY," Petipa's famous ballet to Tchaikovsky music was due to be replaced at Covent Garden Opera House by another programme on Monday night, March 18, but will be given again from March 25 until April 6, when a further programme is announced for the week of April 8-13, as the season is being extended. Helmpann's new ballet, "Adam Zero," to music

[Continued below.

The Wicked Fairy Carabosse (ROBERT HELPMANN) *arrives uninvited at the christening of Princess Aurora, in her sinister coach drawn by birds of prey.*

Puss-in-Boots (STANLEY HOLDEN) *and the exquisite White Cat* (MARGARET DALE) *give their divertissement at the wedding of Aurora and Florimund.*

The fairy-tale personages who come to dance at the festivities after the wedding of Princess Aurora and Prince Florimund include Red Riding Hood (JUNE LEIGHTON) *and the Wolf* (RICHARD ELLIS).

Continued.]

by Arthur Bliss, is due on April 10, but owing to the indisposition of Michael Somes, it has been necessary to postpone the production of Frederick Ashton's new ballet, "Symphonic Variations."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EDWARD MANDINIAN.

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

SIR OSBERT SITWELL has retold the story of Dick Whittington in the form of a satire. As always, his satire is many-headed and the reader who fancies he is watching its lethal operations from a safe eminence of blamelessness may easily find himself in the forefront of the attack. Like its legendary original, "The True Story of Dick Whittington" is a "success story," but Sir Osbert does not regard success as a synonym for moral worth, least of all when, as in Whittington's case, it is coupled with ingratitude to an old friend. Roxana is the heroine; she it is who makes Whittington's fortune by bringing back to him the jewels presented to her by the Emperor of Tongador as a reward for clearing his palace of plague-bearing rats.

Roxana is a charming cat and much the nicest character in the story. Sir Osbert is tender to her few failings and writes of her with sheathed claws. She was not, he admits, "really so unusual a cat"; she even resembled many cats that can be seen flickering in figures-of-eight through railings, or leaping vertically, with the dynamism of ecstasy, up tree-trunks, or up high walls to the beloved roof-tops, their dominion of the night.

But she was pathetically, embarrassingly faithful; she would appear at the most inappropriate times, giving rise to the rumour that Dick was haunted by a cat, making him conspicuous, unusual; and as his wife pointed out, "I want my husband to be just the same as other men, only richer, of course."

But Roxy could not be kept away and it is her appearance at the banquet which brings about the crisis.

The Lord Mayor's Show. The Lord Mayor's Show had many new features, for it consisted of a display of the latest engines of war. These, especially the rubber truncheons, were immensely popular with the crowd and applauded for being "modern" and "realistic." Sir Osbert does not share the crowd's enthusiasm, but he, too, has his weapons, and suddenly the whole of one's mind is a-tingle with their attack.

Those who look for symbolic meanings may identify the faithful, inconvenient Roxana with the Lord Mayor's conscience, his lost simplicity of nature, his better self. But Sir Osbert is not a preacher, he is a satirist and poet, the two arts combining to make a raree-show of extraordinary brilliance. The poetry humanizes the satire, as do his sympathies, his soft spots, which are just as effective as his antipathies, and even more unexpected. He has a kind word for the terrier whose ear Roxana scratched; he often gives first-aid to his victims, and a rap on the knuckles to his favourites.

Seldom has he written with so much zest as here. Englishmen are said not to care for satire; but surely only armament-kings and cat-haters will fail to appreciate this.

The Old Order Changeth. "Carp Country" is a picture of a village in Czechoslovakia (I gathered, in Sudetenland), between the two wars. There are figures in the picture, and it tells a story, a sad story, for Miss Elizabeth Kyle feels wistful about the passing of the old order. The Rosenbergs, members of the Austrian nobility, still live in the district, but not in their big house, which now belongs to the State. The young Scotsman, Adam Ogilvie, is sensitive to all this. He has come to the village as secretary to a learned Czech professor; he himself talks Czech, with a fluency that is surprising considering the difficulties of that language. He and the Professor eat at the same table with the workmen of the glass factory—one of the two chief industries of the village. But the glass has lost its quality and the workmen, not yet accustomed to being top-dogs in their own country, are awkward and suspicious with most strangers, though amiable to Adam. They do not care for the Slovak girl Rushka, and her devoutness is an additional source of offence to their latent anti-clericalism. Adam likes her, but before the romance has blossomed each finds someone more to his, and her, mind; for Rushka it is a burly glass-blower, and for Adam the maidservant, Toni, who turns out not to be a maidservant at all. This latter attachment is cut short by wedding bells; but they do not ring for Adam.

The Political Aspect. So much for the love-interest; a moment's sweetness followed by a bitter sense of loss. Miss Kyle is perhaps more interested in social and political cross-currents, in the master of the glass factory, soon to supplant the Rosenbergs as the chief man of the district; his wife, a peasant with vulgar social ambitions; his daughter, educated into a fine lady. And she underlines the intolerance of the glass-blowers, who get one of their number sacked because he has been a gaol-bird, and cold-shoulder Max, whose home the village is, because he is of German birth. The only workman with the old skill in his fingers, he has returned to execute a special order; and in his spare time he makes a chandelier to replace the broken one in the church. It is his gift to them, a symbolic offering, a gesture of reconciliation; but when they find out who has made it they are furious.

It says much for Miss Kyle's artistry that this question—whether or not the chandelier will be destroyed by the mob—dominates the second half of the book, throwing into the shade that annual episode of supreme importance to the village, the draining of the carp-pond. Says Max to his boss, "As a friend, can you tell me why politics should ruin a man's life? I hated politics always. I loved glass." His boss reminds him of what the Czechs have suffered from the Germans.

During the war one has read many novels founded on racial antipathies, novels in which people have been tortured and torrents of blood flowed; yet this quiet, restrained, beautifully written story, in which no one receives any physical injury, somehow gives one the impression of a deeper sadness, a more implacable hostility.

The famous French author MME. COLETTE *is seen in her Paris apartment at work on a gros-point chair seat. Creator, with M. Willy, of the celebrated heroine Claudine, her latest novel is called "Gigi." Colette remained in residence all through the German occupation. A play "Pas un Mot à la Reine Mère," by her husband Maurice Goudeket and Yves Mirande, is running at the Théâtre Antoine.*

Through Chinese Eyes. In novels about China one looks and indeed hopes for a lot of local colour. But that is because most novels about China are written by foreign devils to whom everything is strange. "Rickshaw Boy" is written by a Chinese, and naturally enough Mr. Lau Shaw does not labour the sights or the customs of Peking. As for politics, they occur, but no one seems to know what they are about. We are not told what army it was that kidnapped Happy Boy, the rickshaw man, or what party sent its thugs to rob him and chase his master into hiding. These things Mr. Shaw takes for granted.

Mutatis mutandis, "Happy Boy's" story is a little like that of Eric in the well-known Victorian novel. He wanted to be good. But circumstances were against him; Mr. Shaw, who has Leftish sympathies, more than once suggests that the order of society was against him. But the main obstacle to his moral and material advancement was undoubtedly Tiger Girl. She made any kind of self-improvement impossible for him, and as long as she held him in thrall he went downhill.

Happy Boy was entirely uneducated; he could not read; his thoughts were of the simplest and often stopped half-way, he seldom quite understood what was going on round him; "it was hard for him to talk to other people." Mr. Shaw has analysed this primitive character (and yet in a way not primitive, for he had a highly developed moral sense) with much skill and sympathy.

Another Eric. In most crime stories the love-interest, if any, is incidental to the business of detection. Not so in "Fallen Angel," however. Miss Marty Holland has boldly struck out a new line. She is concerned for the moral state of her hero, Eric Stanton, tough guy and waster. On the run, Stanton arrives at Pops Eats, a restaurant in Walton, California, and there he falls heavily for Stella. Stanton is in need of money and between them they arrange that he shall marry Emmie, organist at a local church and also endowed with ten thousand dollars—which will be useful to Stella and Stanton when he has cast off Emmie. But before the second part of this plan can be put into operation Stella is murdered. Stanton is the chief suspect. While trying to escape the attentions of Mark Rudd, a peculiarly nauseous detective, two things occur to him: first, that he is much fonder of Emmie than he realised; secondly, that he must find out who did kill Stella. Moral rehabilitation follows; but do not imagine that Virtue has an easy task in reclaiming Eric. Yet strangely enough, one does believe in his conversion.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

The True Story of Dick Whittington. By Osbert Sitwell. (*Home and Van Thal, Ltd.*; 5s.)
Carp Country. By Elizabeth Kyle. (*Peter Davies*; 8s. 6d.)
Rickshaw Boy. By Lau Shaw. (*Michael Joseph*; 10s. 6d.)
Fallen Angel. By Marty Holland. (*Peter Davies*; 7s. 6d.)

"Whitaker's Almanack," the famous reference book, sometimes described as "a reference library in itself," is on sale. A Chronicle of the War from the invasion of Poland till the surrender of Japan, is one of the features of the 1946 edition, seventy-eighth annual volume. The usual three editions are published at slightly increased prices, 12s. 6d., 7s. 6d. (Shorter, paper-covered), and 25s. (Library).

Pin-up Girl: No. 48. Peggy Cummins

It's settled. Honey-haired courtesan Amber St. Clair of Kathleen Winsor's best-seller "Forever Amber" will be played by PEGGY CUMMINS*; the most sought-after screen part for years, for which a score of stars have been tipped in turn. 20th Century-Fox is making this film of Restoration England, and Peggy appears in every one of its 364 scenes; has her personal doctor, nurse, dietician, and is probably the Celluloid City's most heavily-insured actress. As she is prevented from sitting down while wearing her seventeenth-century period gowns, the studio has provided a reclining-board to rest against between scenes without damaging her clothing. Peggy is Irish on both sides; is honey-haired and 5 ft. 1 in.*

BEGINNING AGAIN.*

By PETER COURTENAY.

THE Ship's Adjutant glanced at the address on the telegraph form. " You 'll be home in six hours with luck," he said, and smiled. " How long since you saw England ? "

" Four years. It 's a long time. Much too long."

The slim figure in khaki with three pips on his shoulder turned to look out of the porthole at the strip of ruffled grey water narrowing in the clear English sunshine.

Two hours later the Captain was still looking, as the young green of the fields and hedges, punctuated by winding roads and a hundred lanes, chased each other past the railway-carriage window.

His shoulders stirred restlessly against the seat. He was tired. Mentally stale, and he knew it. His lean, sunburnt face showed it, from the tightness at the corners of his mouth to the faint-blue patches below his eyes, just discernible beneath the tan.

For the hundredth time he went over in his mind those two paragraphs in Blossom's letter. He had read it so many times in the last two months that he could picture their exact position, in his wife's clear handwriting, half-way down the right-hand page.

" Don't be so old-fashioned, my dear," they read. " You talk in your letter like my grandmother might have talked. Snap out of it, my dear. Tony and I are just good friends. I must have someone to go out with when I have some spare time. We get on together and amuse each other. Besides, it isn't as if you didn't know him. After all, you were at school together."

An odd look came into the Captain's eyes. Stubborn, thoughtful, a little cunning, too, perhaps. Blossom would not have recognised it. There were plenty of others who would, though. Those sunburnt, fine-drawn men of the last four years. They had seen it a time or two.

Blossom opened the door of the flat herself. The Captain caught his breath. Everything swam a little. He knew now that he had never quite caught the memory of those misty-grey eyes, or the set of that lovely head, with its sweep of soft, dark hair. His skin tingled.

" Darling ! " she said. She leant back from him, her arms clasped behind his head. " Darling, I just can't believe it 's true at last. Please, dear," she said, " lend me a minute to get my breath back."

The Captain smiled. He took her fingers between his own.

" Show me," he said, " show me every little thing."

Blossom turned down the hallway. " They 're all here," she said. Quickly he welcomed them one by one. Touched the little ivory figure of Psyche on its onyx base. Smiled at each one of the French prints in their thin, gilt frames. Fingered the little alabaster lamp.

Blossom leant back against the mantelpiece. A smile curved the corners of her mouth. " Well ? " she said.

The Captain turned his head. " Grand," he smiled.

She looked at the clock. " Plans ? " she said. " It 's six o'clock already."

" Let 's dance. You say where. You know the ropes," he said. " I 'm only a backwoodsman now."

Blossom put her head on one side. " There 's always the Casanova," she said.

The Captain laughed outright. He remembered that little trait so well. Blossom pretending that she had not made up her mind.

" What that means," he said, " is that there is only the Casanova. Better ring up for a table then."

" I 've got one already. I was going there with Tony, anyhow."

The Captain's head came up with a jerk.

" Your wire didn't come till midday. We 'd fixed this up days ago. It was too late to put him off. It doesn't matter if we 're three."

Blossom was speaking quickly, aggressively almost.

The Captain looked at her for a second before replying.

" Doesn't it ? " he said softly.

Blossom glanced at him sharply. " Darling, you 're not going to be silly about Tony still, are you ? I couldn't possibly put him off now."

" No, I don't suppose you could," he said. " I don't suppose you could." He gazed down at his feet.

Blossom sighed. " Come and see the rest of the flat," she said.

He followed Blossom through the door of the bedroom. He was rather pale under his tan. There it was, as it always had been. The kidney-shaped dressing-table. The pale-green bedside tables. Blossom's with a photograph of himself taken just before he sailed. He had never seen it. He looked at it.

" Have I changed much ? " he said. The way he said it, the remark might have been a thought spoken out loud.

" I don't know yet." She said it with a laugh, but something in the note made the Captain look at her.

" Come in here." Blossom opened another door. " Your dressing-room. All your things are in here."

The Captain was not listening.

He was looking at the single bed in the corner by the window.

" I don't remember that," he said slowly. " That 's new, isn't it ? "

Blossom did not answer. She went on instead.

" Listen, darling," she said. " You 've been away such years. It 's all seemed so dim and strange for me." She put her hands behind her back. The pale column of her neck showed, tensed, as she looked at him.

" Married, yet not married, all these years," she said. The words came with a rush now. " You 've always understood things. I—I want to begin all over again. As if we were engaged, to start off with. Oh, I know it may sound odd." She put her hand on his arm. " But, my dear, you will try to understand, won't you ? You 've always understood."

The Captain's fingers curled, but all the hot words tumbling through his brain died unspoken. The same odd look came into his eyes. The hot pulse in his brain dropped.

" No, I don't," he said. " You get dressed," he said. " I 'll give myself a drink."

The Captain leaned back outside the pale, amber-coloured circle of light thrown from the lampshade on the restaurant table. Thoughtfully, he studied the other's face. " Tony, my lad," he thought, " I 've always felt your eyes were too close together. Sort of mean they 've always looked. I wonder if Blossom knows as much about you as I do ? " he thought. " I don't suppose she does, worse luck."

" Let 's have another drink," he said, and emptied his glass.

Blossom's eyebrows went up a fraction. " Aren't we going to dance ? " she said.

The Captain looked at her. " Yes," he said, " we 're going to dance all right. Till all hours of the morning, if you like." His laugh was rather too loud. " But we aren't an odd number any more. I 've just seen an old friend. Do you mind if I go and talk to her ? "

Blossom's mouth looked pinched as she watched them round the room. They danced well. The Captain and the girl with the too-red hair and the too-low frock.

" Who 's that ? " she said, when he came back. " I don't remember meeting her."

The Captain smiled softly. " No, I don't think you 've met her. I used to know her well before we were married. She doesn't seem to have altered much," he added.

Blossom did not answer. She was looking at a very strange expression on her husband's face.

Tune followed tune in rhythmic sequence. The Captain danced with Blossom now and again. But he danced with the girl with the too-red hair a great deal more.

He came back from a waltz and looked at his watch.

" Funny how time runs away when you 're enjoying yourself," he said. " Laura 's just going. Do you mind if I see her back ? She only lives just round the corner. I shan't be long."

" We 'll have this dance first, if your Laura isn't in too much of a hurry." Blossom's head was high.

Three steps on the floor and her lips brushed the Captain's ear.

" Darling," she whispered, " I want a drink. In the bar," she added. " You and me together."

The Captain's arm tightened under hers.

" The bar is over there," he said, as she turned towards the exit stairs.

" I know," she said, " but I 've changed my mind." Her body pressed against his arm.

The Captain turned out the lamp-switch on his side of the bed.

" Darling," said Blossom, " you 've never told me anything about that girl. I 've never heard of her. Why not ? " she said.

The Captain's lips were pressed in Blossom's dark hair. A faint ghost of that odd expression faded from his eyes.

" I couldn't have," he said. " I 've never met her before."

THE END.

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*

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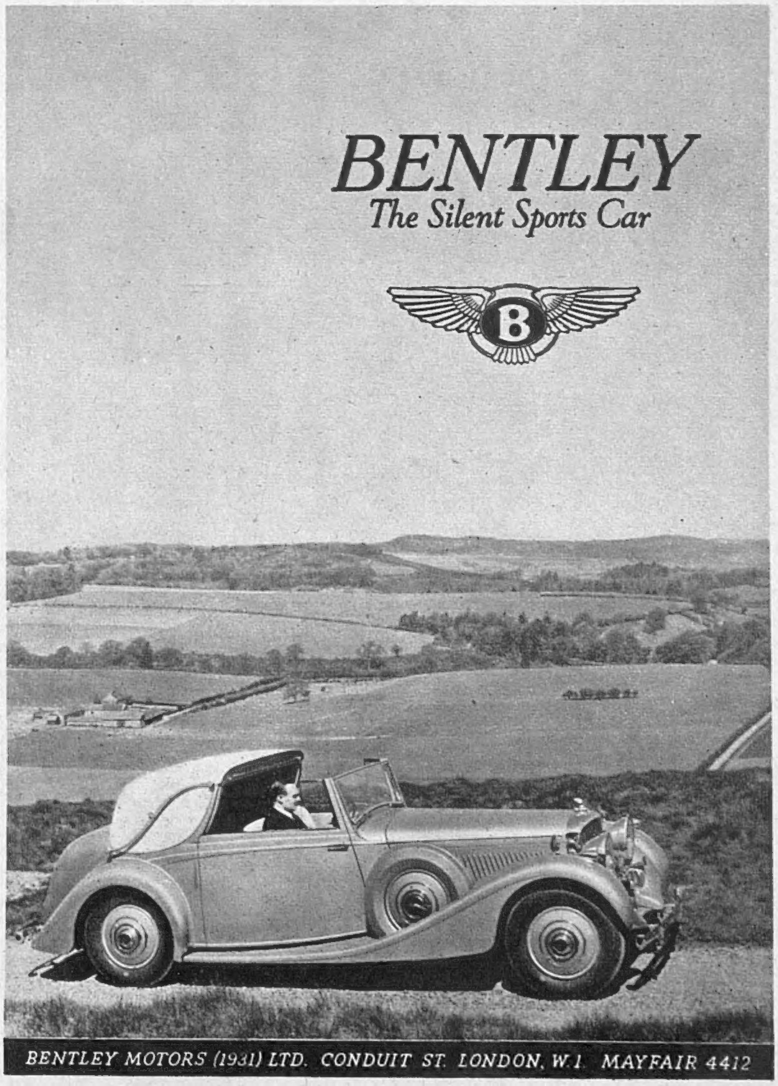

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